cue you in to the fact that you are, after all, in a dream. To make dream flight happen, before you retire for bed, simply repeat the words, "Tonight I fly." Then while still awake, imagine that journey.

Exercise three: Spinning your dream body can sustain the period of sleep and give you greater dream control. Many subjects have used spinning as a means of staying asleep and as a more exciting means of traveling to whatever dream world you desire.

Exercise four: Before bed decide on a problem you would like to solve. Frame your problem in the form of a question. For example, "How can I become less shy?" Once you have selected a problem question, write it down and memorize it. Look for the answer in your next lucid dream.

SUPERNATURAL SWAMIJI

By Dr. Roma Chaudhury

As told to Swarnakamal Bhattacharyya

BY THE grace of the Supreme Mother, I am living the most ordinary life completely free from any trouble whatsoever; the most straightforward and simple life passed in studies, services, writing of books and articles and making speeches. Never had I any occasion to believe in supernatural occurrences.

Strangely enough, I had the glimpses of occurrences of this sort several times in my life. Let me tell you about one of them in brief.

Almost every day I go out to attend religious meetings somewhere. On this day I was proceeding by car to an ashrama of good reputation away from Calcutta. I was sitting on the back seat. A venerable swamiji was on the front seat with the driver to accompany and guide me to the ashrama. The driver was relieved to find the highway free from obstructions. He drove the car at a speed of 70 mph.

We were happy and enjoying the beauty of the forest on both sides of the road, which was empty. All of a sudden an aged swamiji clad in gairic (red ochre) dress of quiet and placid appearance stood in front of our speeding car holding both hands up signaling the car to stop.

"Stop, stop the car," I cried at the driver who strained every muscle to stop the car and save the swamiji.

Both my guide and I were thrown off our seats because of the sudden stop. We climbed back up on our seats and were shocked to learn that there was no one on the road. Before we could recover from the shock and puzzlement, we were further alarmed by a huge shunting engine that crossed our road on a forsaken railway line at an extremely high speed.

Had not the soul of the swamiji stopped our car at that spot, all of us would have been crushed by the engine before we could actually realize the situation.

Horned Jackals & Devil Birds

By Karl P. N. Shuker

What animal makes a cry like a "gurgling, strangled shout rising to a high-pitched scream... as of a creature in its last agony"? Zoologists would like to know.

DEVOTEES of mystery-beast lore associate Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon) with the *nittaewo* — a small hominoid reported to live in the forests. But the *nittaewo* is by no means Sri Lanka's only claim to cryptozoological fame. Also awaiting formal investigation — though largely unknown to the West — are the horned jackal and the devil bird.

The jackal species inhabiting Sri Lanka is *Canis aureus*, the golden jackal. In the lower country these animals sometimes hunt in packs and are frequently encountered on the outskirts of human settlements. Indeed, this species has gained an unsavory reputation among poultry owners due to its taste for their livestock.

Sri Lankans' claim that leader of a golden-jackal pack always has horn jutting from skull is source of zoological mystery.

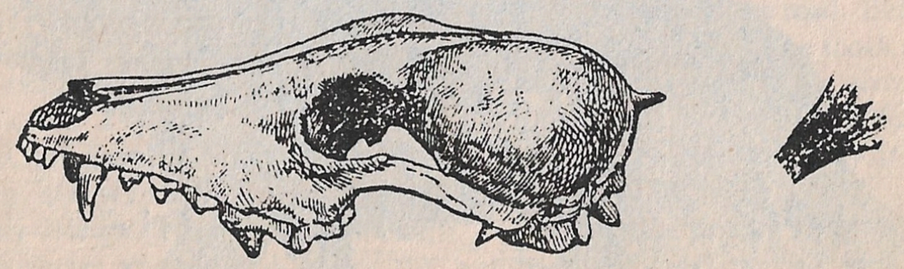
Nevertheless both the Singhalese and Tamil inhabitants of Sri Lanka are happy to meet one member of every jackal pack: the leader. For the leader, however, that meeting is always an unhappy occasion, since the encounter results in its death.

According to a longstanding belief, this individual is set apart and readily distinguished from the others by its possession of a small but distinctly-formed horn. Generally measuring about half an inch long, this singular structure develops directly from the leader jackal's skull but is usually hidden from view by a tuft of fur.

The precise location of this horn on the jackal's skull is a little unclear. For example, in E. Balfour's *The Cyclopaedia of India and of Eastern and Southern Asia* (third edition, 1885), the jackal horn or *narri-komboo* (also spelled *narric-comboo* or, most frequently, *narri-comboo*) is referred to as a "projecting process on the frontal bone [forehead] of the jackal." Yet in Sir Emerson Tennent's *Sketches of the Natural History of Ceylon* (1861) a diagram and description of a horned jackal skull show the horn as a projection from the superoccipital (posterior) region of the skull. Perhaps the horn's location varies between individuals.

In any event, the occipital position is supported by solid evidence in the form of a preserved skull. This was the model for Tennent's diagram and was observed by many scientists when exhibited for some years as a specimen at London's Museum of the College of Surgeons.

The *narri-comboo* is greatly sought after by the Singhalese and Tamils because they revere it as a powerful talisman, capable of bestowing upon its owner the realization of his every wish. It is obviously not an item to let out of one's sight — although even if it is mislaid there should be no cause for alarm. According to local legend, this wonderful object invariably returns to its careless possesser of its own accord. Another of its talents is its skill at theft-thwarting; according, again, to local legend, any valuable items such as jewelery will remain perfectly safe from the threat of theft as long as a



The jackal's "horn" appears as half-inch projection from forehead of skull exhibited at London's Museum of the College of Surgeons. In mid-19th Century naturalist Sir Emerson Tennent was given horn (right) by informant.

Some have speculated Sri Lanka's "devil bird" is related to American horned owl but this explanation ignores what witnesses report.

narri-comboo is placed alongside them.

Most marvelous of all, however, is the Singhalese belief that anyone possessing a *narri-comboo* is ever afterwards rendered invincible in any lawsuit, emerging the victor from whatever type of legal case he should find himself involved with in the future. Tennent recounts this delightful anecdote:

> A gentleman connected with the Supreme Court of Colombo has repeated to me a circumstance, within his own knowledge, of a plaintiff who, after numerous defeats, eventually succeeded against his opponent by the timely acquisition of this invaluable charm. Before the final hearing of the case, the mysterious horn was duly exhibited to his friends; and the consequence was, that the adverse witnesses, appalled by the belief that no one could possibly give judgment against a person so endowed, suddenly modified their previous evidence, and secured an unforeseen victory for the happy owner of the *narric-comboo*!

Clearly the magic of the jackal horn is of a singularly devious nature.

Moreover, it has apparently survived undiminished into modern times. As recently as 1963, for example, Harry Williams remarked in *Ceylon—Pearl of the East* (second edition) that the Singhalese consider the possession of a jackal horn to be a great prize, a charm of notable potency.

* * *

THE JACKAL-horn legend indisputably has a basis in fact. The London skull alone is proof of that. In addition, in his *Sketches* Tennent also described and figured a specimen of the horny sheath from a jackal horn presented to him by a Mr. Lavalliere, at that time the district judge of Kandy. And certainly there is every chance that further specimens are preserved in Sri Lanka.

The possibility that such a horn is

possessed *only* by the leader of a jackal pack, on the other hand, is much less plausible. Satisfactory support for this claim is not forthcoming from either of the two reasonable explanations of horn development by jackals.

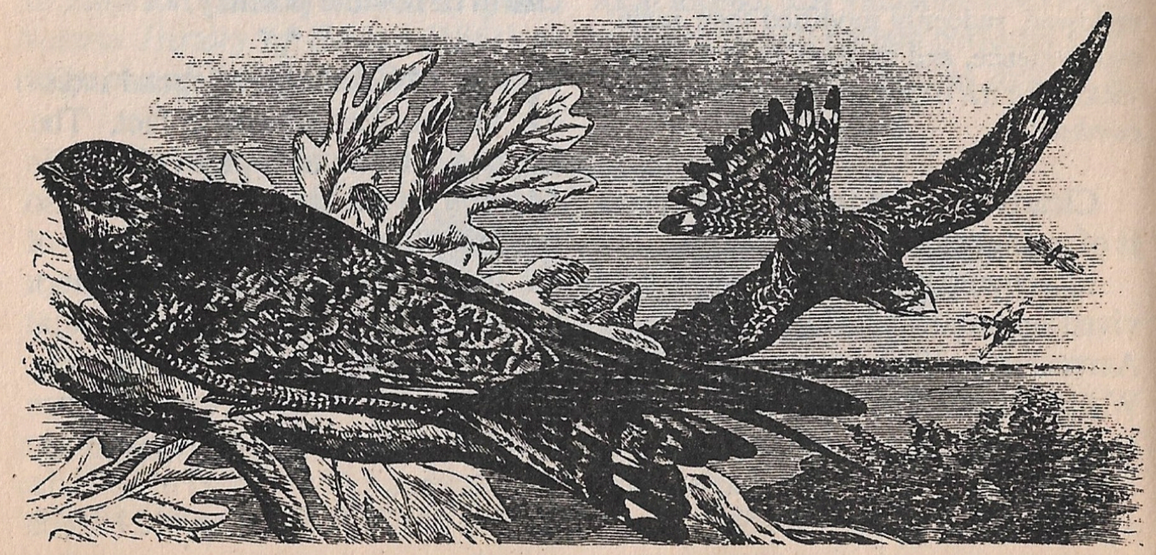
One of these explanations is that the horn development may be genetically-induced — that is, via a mutant gene's action. Under such circumstances, however, horn production could be correlated with pack leadership only if a given leader possessed this mutant gene plus its visible expression (the horn) *and* passed the gene on to his offspring which in turn became horned *and also* became pack leaders.

For such a scenario to be at all plausible, the mutant gene would need to be dominant (to ensure its visible expression in leader offspring) and preferably linked to the male sex (to prevent female, and hence nonleader, jackals from developing horns). Yet even so, this hypothesis fails because jackals do not always hunt in packs; some seek out prey alone or merely in pairs. Consequently there is every chance that some jackals that inherited the horn-producing mutant gene from their pack-leader father and grew horns would not become pack leaders themselves but would pursue an independent hunting existence instead.

In short, although it is certainly possible that horn development in jackals is genetically induced, such an explanation cannot lend support for the native belief that such development is limited to pack leaders.

The second plausible explanation for the jackal horn's production is that it occurs through some external physical event. In *More Animal Legends* (1959) zoologist Maurice Burton reported that sometimes, because of an injury received during a fight, a horn will grow from the center of a deer's

Another candidate proposed to explain "devil birds" is an unknown species of nightjar whose American cousin is the nighthawk.



forehead (i.e., from its frontal bones). Perhaps the jackal horn is of comparable origin. Such a mechanism could explain the uncertainty concerning its precise location on the skull; horn development may ensue from any cranial region that received a severe blow.

At the same time, although pack leadership is inevitably accompanied by exposure to injury, nonleader pack members (as well as solitary jackals) are certainly not immune to injury either. Again, we find no support for the native belief that the jackal horn is unique to pack leaders.

References to horned dogs (not to mention horned cats, hares, horses, pigs and other animals) are contained within a number of medieval works. Unfortunately many accounts from these volumes are so interwoven with myth and folklore that it is virtually impossible to disentangle fact from fiction, thereby reducing their value as sources of information concerning animal anomalies.

In the case of horned dogs, however, it is evident that one genuine example still persists in Sri Lanka. Let us hope, therefore, that that nation's horned jackals will engender serious research interest in the near future. It would be a great loss to science if such remarkable beasts should disappear, unstudied and unexplained.

* * *

WHEREAS the horned jackal, though certainly odd, is nothing more than an oddity within a known species, the identity of the devil bird is far less easily resolved. For a detailed account of this mysterious and macabre creature, let us turn again to Tennent's *Sketches*:

> Of the nocturnal accipitres the most remarkable is the brown owl, which, from its hideous yell, has acquired the name of the "Devil-Bird." The Singhalese regard it literally with horror, and its scream by night in the vicinity of a village is bewailed as the harbinger of impending calamity. There is a popular legend in connection with it, to the effect that a morose and savage husband, who suspected the fidelity of his wife, availed himself of her absence to kill her child, of whose paternity he was doubtful, and on her return placed before her a curry prepared from its flesh. Of this the unhappy woman partook, till discovering the crime by finding the finger of her infant, she fled in frenzy to the forest, and there destroyed herself. On her death she was metamorphosed, according to the Buddhist belief, into an ulama, or Devil-bird, which still at nightfall horrifies the villagers by repeating the frantic screams of the bereaved mother in her agony.

Many other, comparable accounts are also on record. As far back as 1681, for example, Knox's *Ceylon* contained a piece which clearly refers to the same creature, although in this instance a theological rather than a zoological explanation is offered for the origin of the horrific shrieks in question. The item states:

> This for certain I can affirm, That oftentimes the Devil doth cry with an audible

Voice in the Night; 'tis very shrill, almost like the barking of a Dog. This I have often heard myself; but never heard that he did anybody any harm.... To believe that this is the Voice of the Devil these reasons urge, because there is no Creature known to the Inhabitants, that cry like it, and because it will on a sudden depart from one place, and make a noise in another, quicker than any fowl could fly; and because the very Dogs will tremble and shake when they hear it.

In 1849 Pridham's *Ceylon* contained the following description:

Devil's Bird (Strix Gaulama or Ulama, Singh). A species of owl. The wild and wailing cry of this bird is considered a sure presage of death and misfortune, unless measures be taken to avert its infernal threats, and refuse its warning. Though often heard even on the tops of their houses, the natives maintain that it has never been caught or distinctly seen, and they consider it to be one of the most annoying of the evil spirits which haunt their country.

And in 1881 Haeckel's *Visit to Ceylon* mentioned "the uncanny cry of the devil-bird, *Syrnium Indrani*...."

Strix gaulama, *Strix ulama* and *Syrnium indrani* are all scientific synonyms of the brown wood owl, nowadays referred to as *Strix leptogrammica*. Its Sri Lankan representative is the dark subspecies *S. l. ochrongenys* — known to the Singhalese as *ulama*, and to the Tamils as *andai* — and occurring widely throughout the island. Stoutly-built, measuring just about under 20 inches, the Sri Lankan brown wood owl is distinguished from all other owls here by its diagnostic combination of white eyebrows, broad black ring encircling eyes set in paler facial discs, and buff-white underparts bearing narrow transverse bars of brown.

But if the devil bird is nothing more than the brown wood owl, why should it be of any interest to cryptozoologists? What mystery about them awaits a solution?

It turns out that it is by no means certain devil birds are brown wood owls. Indeed, this identification appears to be little more than a convenient one which in reality contains discrepancies and raises a host of unanswered questions.

For example, in Norah Burke's *Eleven Leopards: A Journey Through the Jungles of Ceylon* (1965), a second owl species is offered as the culprit. Burke notes that some Sri Lankans believe that the devil bird's bloodcurdling screams are actually the "love-song of the forest eagle owl." This theory has also been put forward by George Morrison Henry in *A Guide to the Birds of Ceylon* (1955). Sri Lanka's subspecies — *Bubo nipalensis blighi* — is about 25 inches long, widely distributed but rarer than the brown wood owl, and readily recognized because of its combination of long ear-tufts, dark upperparts and brown-barred white underparts.

Tennent's *Sketches* includes a footnote which refers to yet another devil-bird identity. The source is a Mr. Mitford of the Ceylon Civil Service, a noted observer of the island's birds:

The Devil-Bird is not an owl. I never heard it until I came to Kornegalle, where it haunts the rocky hill at the back of Government-house. Its ordinary note is a magnificent clear shout like that of a human being, and which can be heard at a great distance, and has a fine effect in the silence of the closing night. It has another cry like that of a hen just caught, but the sounds which have earned for it its bad name, and which I have heard but once to perfection, are indescribable, the most appalling that can be imagined, and scarcely to be heard without shuddering; I can only compare it to a boy in torture, whose screams are being stopped by being strangled. I have offered rewards for a specimen, but without success. The only European who had seen and fired at one agreed with the natives that it is the size of a pigeon, with a long tail. I believe it is a Podargus or Night Hawk.

In a later note to Tennant, Mitford added, "I have since seen two birds by moonlight, one of the size and shape of a cuckoo, the other a large black bird, which I imagine to be the one which gives these calls."

In Sri Lanka the terms "night hawk" and "podargus" refer to a number of nightjar species (related to the familiar American whippoorwill) and also their much rarer relative, the Ceylon frogmouth *Batrachostomus moniliger*. This latter species, however, can quickly be discounted as a devil-bird contender, because it attains only a diminutive length of nine inches and is little-known even to native Sri Lankans. Moreover, according to Drs. Salim Ali and S. Dillon Ridley in their definitive *Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan, Together With Those of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and Ceylon* (second edition, 1969), its call consists merely of a rapid series of soft "karoo" or "whoo" cries, together with a throaty chuckle. Hardly the spine-chilling shrieks attributed to the devil bird.

The nightjars at first sight appear more promising. Although equally small-bodied, their tails are much longer so that they correspond in outline with the birds described by Mitford. Nonetheless their relatively restrained calls certainly do not match those of the devil bird. Indeed, at the present time no known bird's do.

It helps us little to return to the more popular owl identities. In both species the tail is short, while their calls once again seem too subdued for consideration. In fact, the mere thought that the brown wood owl could provide the identity of the devil bird has been met with surprise and swift dismissal from some Sri Lankan inhabitants.

In his book mentioned earlier, Harry Williams documented his own experiences of the devil bird and its cry which he described as a "gurgling, strangled shout rising to a high pitched scream which ends in a bubbling diminuendo as of a creature in its last agony." As a result he rejected the Buddhists' belief that the brown wood owl was responsible for such sounds. And although his bungalow's neighboring woodlands contained many owls of this species, he never once heard that hideous cry in

Fate Jan 1989 42-1

this area. Yet he heard it on three occasions in the low-country jungles which native Sri Lankans believe to be the devil bird's home. It is difficult to believe that so familiar and widespread a bird on the island as the brown wood owl could be responsible for such singular cries without scientists' knowing about it.

* * *

NO DOUBT many animal species have remained mysterious (and in some cases unknown to science for considerable periods of time) because age-old native superstitions and taboos have been placed on them. Such taboos have actually been beneficial to the creatures, protecting them from slaughter at the hands of their native human neighbors.

So it is not impossible that an unknown species of bird inhabits Sri Lanka's lesser-explored dense jungles, remaining protected from prying human eyes (and accompanying killing implements) by its fearsome cries and the superstitious horror they have inspired. Indeed, Ali and Ridley mention that a still-undescribed form of owl belonging to the genus *Strix* apparently exists in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Perhaps an equally obscure owl or even a nightjar awaits scientific recognition in Sri Lanka too.

Finally, it should be noted that neither the horned jackal nor the devil bird appears to be confined to Sri Lanka. India has comparable legends concerning both of these animals. In India the devil bird is referred to as *churail*, according to Norah Burke, and this vast country is certainly well supplied with jackals, owls and nightjars. Perhaps the mysteries of the horned jackal and the devil bird may not be solved in Sri Lanka after all.

Nonetheless, as long as Sri Lanka's jungles echo with unearthly shrieks more like those of a banshee than of a bird, the ageless enchantment of Sri Lanka will continue undiminished. And even if the horned jackal and the devil bird are explained, there still remains the enigmatic *nittaewo*....

A CALENDAR WITHOUT JANUARY

By Ida M. Pardue

NO January? Certainly not for Puritans three centuries ago or for the early Christian Saxons. What Puritan, dead set against anything pagan, could possibly speak the name of a heathen god? How could a Puritan not avoid any mention of January?

This was unthinkable since January honored Janus, the holiest of Roman gods, and the whole month was sacred.

The Puritans got around this neatly. They simply ignored Janus and called the first month of the year just that — First Month. Whether they borrowed the idea from the Saxons or not, the Saxons called it the same thing, after becoming Christians.

The Saxons' First Month replaced their pagan Wolf Month, a season when they were always plagued by hungry wolves.

WHEEL OF FORTUNE

by Paul Steiner

During the encore of a sold-out concert at Houston's Stage One, John Spinks, songwriter and guitar player for The Outfield, suffered a leg injury requiring 50 stitches. The crowd was reaching out to grab at Spinks. The Outfield's 6'4" leader tried to take a step backwards from the stage's lip. Just then a fan managed to get hold of Spinks' sneaker. He fell backwards into the monitors, slashing his calf. Despite the massive flow of blood, Spinks finished the song, and passed out in the ambulance on the way to the hospital. The tune which Spinks had insisted on finishing was, ironically, "No Surrender."

●

It took Richard Rhodes five years to research and write his book *The Making of the Atomic Bomb* — two years longer than it took the nuclear scientists in New Mexico to create the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima.

●

Tommy Lasorda, manager of the Los Angeles Dodgers baseball team, invariably eats linguini before a game, choosing red clam sauce if his team is facing a right-handed pitcher or white clam sauce if he's a left-hander.

●

Holly Hunter, best known for the film *Broadcast News*, recalls that after graduating from Carnegie-Mellon, she was on the way to an audition with playwright Beth Henley. Both got trapped in an elevator where Hunter made such a good impression she landed a part in Henley's *Crimes of the Heart*.

●

The first Sherlock Holmes adventures were published in October 1887. Holmes and his loyal colleague Dr. Watson began chasing their nemesis, Prof. James Moriarty, through the pages of classic detective literature. Today literature comes via video tape, Holmes and Watson are still going strong, and a latter-day Moriarty has become one of the deductive duos most ardent fans.

Interestingly the creator of a new interactive VCR game called "VCR 221 B Baker Street" is none other than James "Jay" Moriarty, a Hollywood writer-producer. The game is based on his successful board game 221 B Baker Street which he introduced in 1975.

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